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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: ENGAGING NORWAY ON AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. A:STATE 15623
[1](#)B. B:OSLO 123

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Kevin M. Johnson
for reasons 1.4 b and d

1.(C) Summary: February 27 Norwegian MFA Political Director Vegard Ellefson told DCM that the GON appreciated the U.S. outreach and interest in allied opinions on the new Afghan strategy. The Administration's rapid appointment of Special Representative Holbrooke was an excellent start and Ellefson encouraged consultations between Holbrooke and NATO. He also urged Holbrooke work with Kai Eide to find common ground on how to make UNAMA more robust. Consultations between Holbrooke and Eide on the overall strategy would be a welcome sign of support for the UN role. Deputy Foreign Minister Johansen will visit Afghanistan in early March and would be glad to give U.S. officials a read-out of his visit. End Summary

2.(C) Ellefson also liked the U.S. regional approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan. He noted that Norway is the only Nordic country with a development program in Pakistan. While he appreciated the need to address the Pakistani border area, he cautioned that we should be careful not to overstretch ISAF and not to overstep the UN Security Council mandates. Ellefson pointed out that a regional approach also highlights the importance of other actors such as India and Iran. On the latter, he asked that the U.S. consider whether Norway and its connections to Iran could be used in a constructive way. However, he was careful to note that Norway will not be charting its own course with regard to Iran.

3.(C) Responding to the specifics in reftel, Ellefson said that the GON generally supports the concept of the ANA Trust Fund, but felt that NATO is not set up to deal with this well. However, he agreed that there has been much discussion of general points and the Summit is the time to make decisions on the trust fund and other issues. The ambitious nature of the numbers and the administrative burden does give him pause. Overall, Norway is keen to promote Afghanization and believes these ideas will support that effort. Finally, referring to some talk about a Contact Group, Ellefson stressed that Norway would want to be a part of that if it were to come to pass. He pointed out that Afghanistan is the largest recipient of Norwegian aid.

[1](#)4. (C) We also delivered reftel to the Norwegian Chief of Defense and to the MOD's security policy and Afghanistan sections. Defense officials echoed Ellefson's appreciation of the outreach effort. They did not have immediate comments on the contents of the demarche but have indicated in previous meetings, including the February 13 visit of Department of State SCA DAS Patrick Moon (reftel B), that they are actively considering how the Norwegian contributions to the ISAF mission can be improved and continued.
WHITNEY